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THE PHANTOM™

#14
MOONSTONE™
\$3.50



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Rod Reis

THE PHANTOM

created by LEE FALK

"WALKER'S LINE"

PART ONE OF TWO

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SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR PHANTOM CONSULTANT
ED RHOADES

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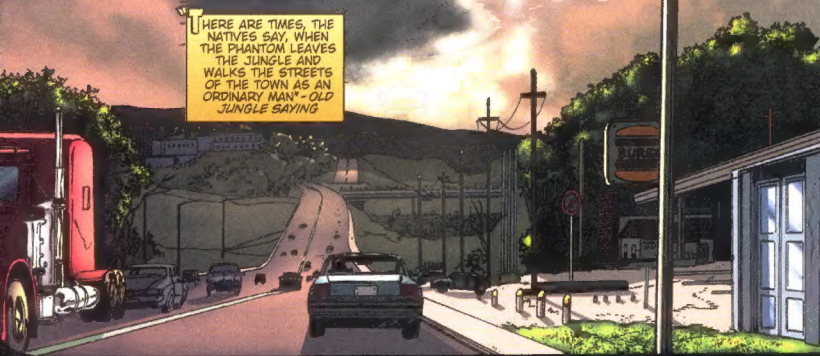


"IT WAS ALMOST A YEAR AFTER YOUR GRANDFATHER WAS **MURDERED**. HIS KILLERS HAD STOLEN HIS GUN BELT AND I JUST COULDN'T LIVE WITH THAT. I HAD TO GET IT BACK."

"I WAS TRACKING THE KILLERS AND THEIR TRAIL LED ME BACK TO AMERICA, BUT SOON TURNED **COLD**. LUCKILY, I WOUND UP NEAR CLARKSVILLE, THE TOWN WHERE I WENT TO SCHOOL WHILE LIVING WITH MY AUNT AND UNCLE."

THERE ARE TIMES, THE NATIVES SAY, WHEN THE PHANTOM LEAVES THE JUNGLE AND WALKS THE STREETS OF THE TOWN AS AN ORDINARY MAN - OLD JUNGLE SAYING

CLARKSVILLE, MISSOURI 50 MILES

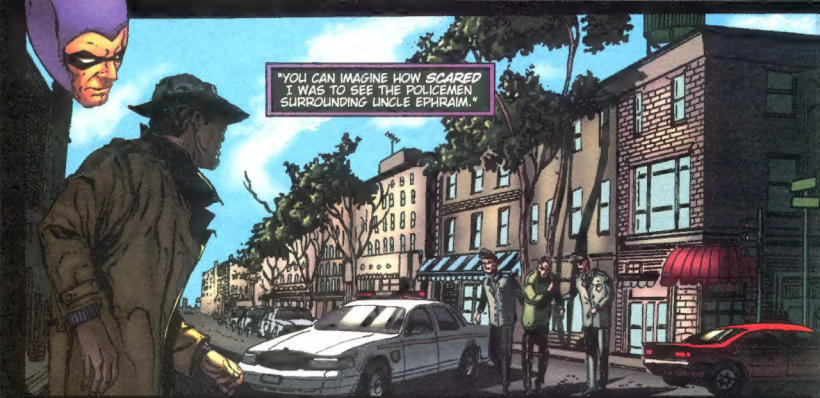


YES, AUNT BESSIE, I'LL BE THERE IN THE MORNING. I'M GOING TO STAY AT A HOTEL HERE TONIGHT.

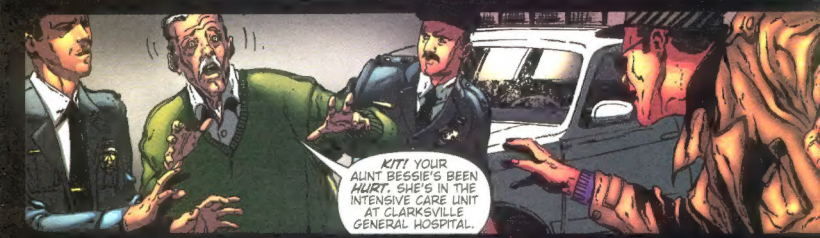
HEH... NO, MA'AM, GURAN ISN'T WITH ME.

OKAY, I'LL SEE YOU IN THE MORNING.

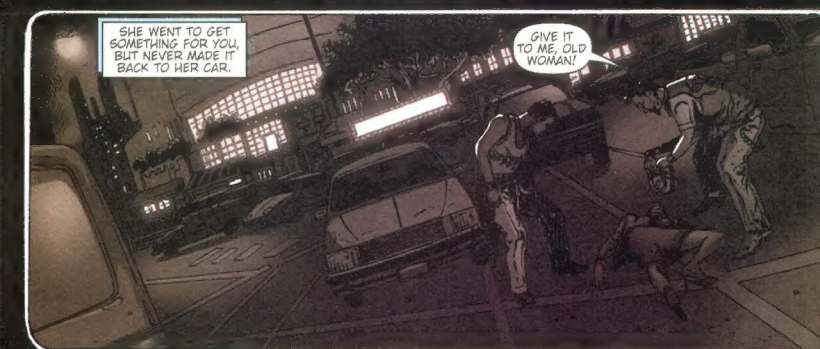




"YOU CAN IMAGINE HOW SCARED
I WAS TO SEE THE POLICEMEN
SURROUNDING UNCLE EPHRAIM."

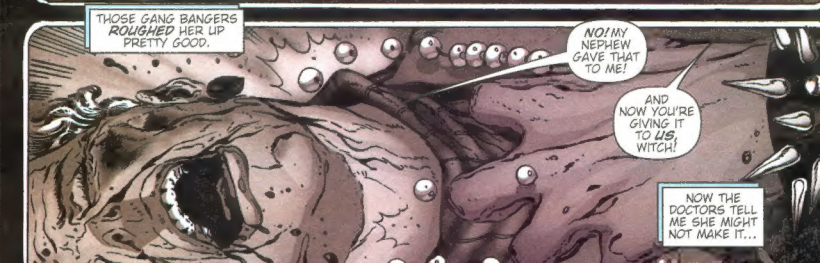


KIT! YOUR
AUNT BESSIE'S BEEN
HURT. SHE'S IN THE
INTENSIVE CARE UNIT
AT CLARKSVILLE
GENERAL HOSPITAL.



SHE WENT TO GET
SOMETHING FOR YOU,
BUT NEVER MADE IT
BACK TO HER CAR.

GIVE IT
TO ME, OLD
WOMAN!



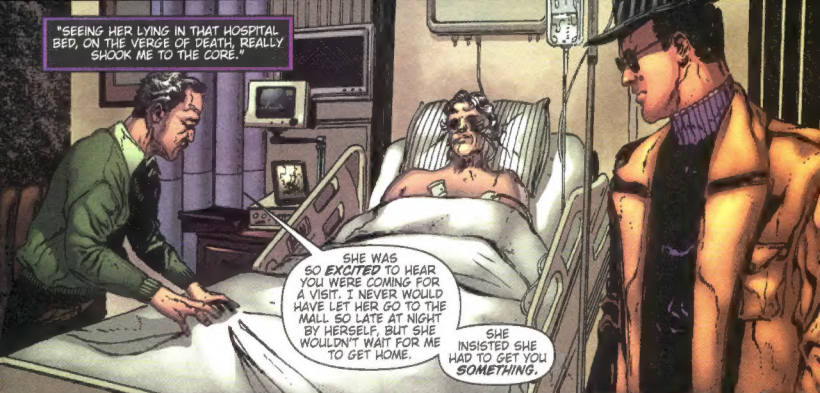
THOSE GANG BANGERS
ROUGHED HER UP
PRETTY GOOD.

NO! MY
NEPHEW
GAVE THAT
TO ME!

AND
NOW YOU'RE
GIVING IT
TO US,
WITCH!

NOW THE
DOCTORS TELL
ME SHE MIGHT
NOT MAKE IT...

"SEEING HER LYING IN THAT HOSPITAL BED, ON THE VERGE OF DEATH, REALLY SHOOK ME TO THE CORE."



SHE WAS SO EXCITED TO HEAR YOU WERE COMING FOR A VISIT. I NEVER WOULD HAVE LET HER GO TO THE MALL SO LATE AT NIGHT BY HERSELF, BUT SHE WOULDN'T WAIT FOR ME TO GET HOME.

SHE INSISTED SHE HAD TO GET YOU SOMETHING.



WHO DID THIS? WHY? AUNT BESSIE WOULD NEVER HURT ANYONE...



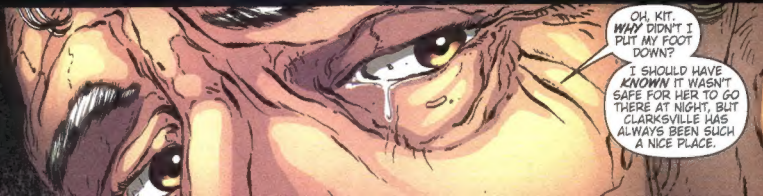
A STREET GANG. THEY CAME TO TOWN NOT LONG AFTER YOU LEFT.

A "STREET GANG"?

THINK OF THEM AS A TRIBE OF EVIL MEN WITH NO HONOR.



THE NEWSPAPER IS ALWAYS RUNNING STORIES ON THE BAD THINGS THEY'VE DONE, BUT I NEVER THOUGHT IT WOULD AFFECT US...



OH, KIT. WHY DIDN'T I PUT MY FOOT DOWN?

I SHOULD HAVE KNOWN! IT WASN'T SAFE FOR HER TO GO THERE AT NIGHT. BUT CLARKSVILLE HAS ALWAYS BEEN SUCH A NICE PLACE.

"IT WAS LIKE WATCHING MY MOTHER AND FATHER DIE ALL OVER AGAIN. I COULDN'T HELP BUT FEEL LIKE THERE WAS SOMETHING WRONG WITH ME. WHY ELSE WOULD EVERYONE I LOVED DIE AND LEAVE ME ALL ALONE?"

THIS NEVER WOULD HAVE HAPPENED IF I HADN'T TOLD HER I WAS COMING BACK.

IT'S NOT YOUR FAULT SON. I'M SURE YOU WERE AS *EXCITED* TO SEE HER AS SHE WAS TO SEE YOU.

EVER SINCE YOU LOST YOUR PARENTS, I'VE BEEN ACUTELY AWARE THAT WE'RE ALL YOU HAVE LEFT. IT'S ONLY NATURAL YOU'D WANT TO SEE US AS MUCH AS WE'D WANT TO SEE YOU.

I GAVE HER THAT NECKLACE TO PROTECT HER. NOT TO BRING HER INTO HARM'S WAY...

THE NEXT MORNING.

IF YOU HAVE SOMEONE TO PRAY TO, GENTLEMAN, I SUGGEST YOU DO SO NOW.

THE DAY AFTER THAT.

AND THE DAY AFTER THAT...



"ON THE FOURTH DAY, SHE WOKE UP BRIEFLY..."

I'M SORRY
I PUT YOU IN
DANGER, AUNT
BESSIE.

NONSENSE!
~COUGH~
YOU DIDN'T DO
ANYTHING OF
THE SORT...

IF ANYONE
SHOULD FEEL REGRET
IT'S ME. I SHOULD HAVE
LISTENED TO YOUR
UNCLE AND WAITED FOR
HIM. NOW LOOK WHAT
I'VE DONE TO
YOU BOYS.

HUSH! YOU NEED TO
THINK POSITIVE
THOUGHTS NOW, BESSIE.
NO WIFE OF MINE IS
GOING TO LAY AROUND
THIS HOSPITAL FEELING
SORRY FOR ME, KIT
OR HERSELF.



AUNT BESSIE, THAT
NECKLACE WAS SUPPOSED
TO PROTECT YOU, NOT
CAUSE YOU PAIN AND
SUFFERING.

I'M SO
SORRY...

YOU BE QUIET, TOO! THIS IS NO
TIME FOR A BUNCH OF LONG
FACES AND SOUR PUSSES!

WHY DON'T YOU GO FOR A
WALK, KIT. THE FRESH AIR MIGHT DO
YOU SOME GOOD AFTER BEING COOPED UP
IN HERE FOR THE LAST FOUR DAYS.

QUIET
NOW, BESSIE,
YOU JUST
REST...



"I SPOKE WITH HER DOCTOR AFTER LEAVING THE ROOM AND HE DIDN'T OFFER MUCH HOPE. HE SAID SHE MIGHT PULL THROUGH, BUT IT WOULD BE TOUGH AND GO FOR THE NEXT FEW DAYS. SO, I FOLLOWED UNCLE EPHRAIM'S ADVICE AND WENT TO CLEAR MY HEAD."

GANG SHOOTING!

GET A DOCTOR OUT HERE! THIS MAN IS LOSING BLOOD FAST!



HIS PULSE IS GETTING FAINT!

SIR, YOU CAN'T GO IN THERE.

I'M SORRY. IS THAT MAN GOING TO BE ALL RIGHT?

MOST GANG VIOLENCE DOESN'T TURN OUT GOOD, BUT WE CAN ALWAYS PRAY FOR A MIRACLE.



DOCTOR! WE'VE LOST HIM...





"IT'S A FACT WAS RIGHT. I KNOW
I COULDN'T DO ANYTHING TO HER
BUT BESSIE, BUT I DID HAPPEN
KNOW A THING OR TWO ABOUT
CHASING OFF JACKALS."

DID YOU
CATCH MY
HIGH SCORE
ON THAT NEW
GAME?

ALL YOU
TALK ABOUT IS
THOSE STUPID
ARCADE
GAMES.



YOU
BETTER HOPE
YOU DIDN'T SPEND
ALL YOUR MOMMY'S
MONEY IN THAT
ARCADE, PRETTY
BOY



WH-WHAT
D-DO YOU
W-WANT?

"WH-WH-
WHAT D-D-DO
Y-YOU
W-WANT?"

HEH HEH HEH
HEH. WHAT A
PUNK!



WE ASKED
YOU A
QUESTION,
JERK!



HERE'S WHAT WE WANT, PRETTY BOY. GIVE ME YOUR WALLET...AND YOUR GIRL.

NOW!

DO IT NOW, MAN, OR I'M GONNA CUT YOU AND LET YOU BLEED...



L-LOOK MAN, J-JUST BACK OFF AND LEAVE US ALONE.

I TELL YOU WHAT, LITTLE MAN. YOU AND YOUR BOY-TOY LEAVE AND ME AND MY HOMIES WILL SHOW THESE CHICKIES A REAL GOOD TIME.

HEW HEW HEW HEW

COME HERE, CHICKIE!

GET OFF ME!

A comic book panel showing the Phantom, a man in a blue suit and mask, attacking a man in a dark suit. The Phantom is in the air, having just thrown a knife. The man in the suit is screaming in pain, with blood on his face. A woman is visible in the bottom left corner, looking on in shock. The background is a dark, industrial setting with a large window.

DIDN'T YOUR
MOTHER EVER
TEACH YOU NOT
TO PAW AT A
LADY?

GR-UNCH!

P HANTOM HAS THE
STRENGTH OF TEN
TIGERS*—OLD
JUNGLE SAYING

WHAT
IS THIS, ESA,
A COSTUMED
PARTY?

NO,
ACTUALLY, IT
LOOKS LIKE A
CLASSROOM.
AND I'M ABOUT
TO START THE
LESSON,
SO...

...SIT
DOWN!

GONNA
GUT YOU
LIKE A FISH,
MAN!

YOU
SHOULDN'T
PLAY WITH
KNIVES...

...YOU
COULD GET
HURT.

WHAM



...WHERE HE
WENT?

"I COULDN'T BELIEVE HOW FAST
THOSE JACKALS HAD SUNK THEIR
TEETH INTO CLARKSVILLE. AND I WAS
APPALLED AT THE LEVEL OF GREED
AND CRUELTY THEY SHOWED."

YOU
MISSED YOUR
PAYMENT
LAST WEEK,
OLD MAN.

I'VE GIVEN
YOU **EVERYTHING** WE
HAD IN THE SLUSH
FUND. I CAN'T GIVE YOU
ANYTHING ELSE OR THE
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
WILL **FIND OUT** WE
HAVE NO MONEY AND
SHUT US DOWN.

THEY'LL
SEND ME TO
JAIL!

WHAT'S YOUR
PROBLEM, HOMES?
YOU KNOW YOU CAN'T
BE **DOGGING US** ON
THE CASH FLOW.

WELL, THAT'S
NOT OUR PROBLEM,
ESA. AND YOU WON'T
HAVE TO WORRY
ABOUT JAIL IF YOU
DON'T **PAY US.**

THERE
WON'T BE NO
CELL WAITIN'
FOR YOU, JUST
A COFFIN,
HOMES!

NOW, **GET
BACK** IN THERE
AND GET THEM LIVING
CORPSES TO PAY
UP, OLD MAN. OR
YOU'LL BE THE ONE
NEEDING SOME
ASSISTANCE
LIVING.

HEY! WHO
TURNED
OUT THE
LIGHT?



YOU NEED
LIGHT? HOW
ABOUT SOME
STARS?

SMASH

WHAT
KINDA FREAK
SHOW IS
THIS?

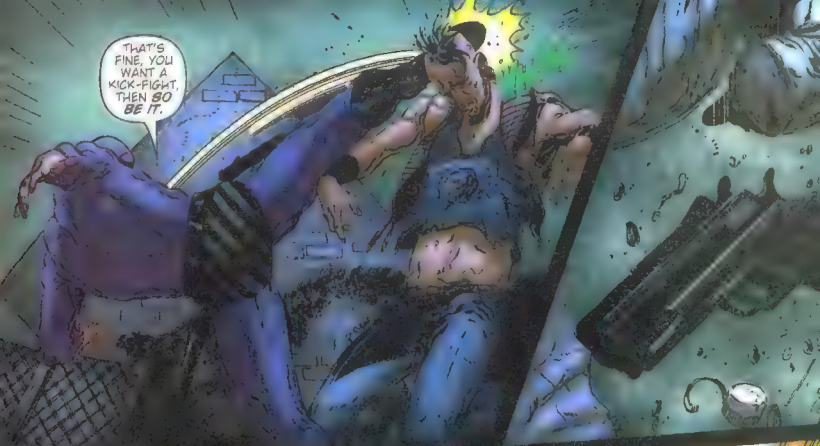
I WAS
JUST ASKING
MYSELF THE
SAME
QUESTION

I'M
GONNA BURN
YOU DOWN,
MAN!

BLAM

GUNS DON'T
KILL PEOPLE,
IDIOTS WITH
GUNS KILL
PEOPLE

YOU AIN'T
GONNA
SHOOT ME,
HOMES!



THAT'S FINE, YOU WANT A KICK-FIGHT, THEN **SO BE IT.**



I CAN SHOOT YOU WITH YOUR OWN PIECE JUST AS EASY, **FREAK!**

HAVEN'T YOU LEARNED YOUR LESSON ABOUT PLAYING WITH GUNS YET?



WHERE IS THE NECKLACE THAT BEARS THIS MARK?

WHAT "NECKLACE"? WHAT'RE YOU TALKING ABOUT, **FREAK** SHOW?



DON'T KNOW **WHAT** HAPPENED HERE, BUT THESE BOYS SURE TOOK A BEATING.

CLARKSVILLE CITY PARK

HERE,
KITTY,
KITTY...

NO!
LET GO
OF ME!

CLARKSVILLE
CITY PARK

NO!
PLEASE
DON'T!

OH, COME
ON, CHICKIE.
YOU KNOW
YOU WANT
IT



AND THE MORE I FIGHT, THE MORE I
REALIZE I AM NOT AN ENGLISH I FELT THE ANGER
I BECAME. I WAS CROSSING THE LINE FROM MAN TO BEAST. I WAS
BECOMING THE TIGER WHOSE
TERRITORY WAS BEING DEFILED
BY THESE JACKALS. AND I HAD TO
FIGHT TO LIVE!

BACK OFF
CUR!

YOU GOT
ONE CHANCE TO
RUN AWAY, THEN
I'M GONNA MESS
YOU UP, MAN!



"HIS AIN'T
YOUR PARTY
TO CRASH,
SPANDEX-
BOY
YOU BETTER
GET YOUR
OWN CHICK & IF
YOU WANNA
WHET YOUR
WHISTLE



YOU
TOOK THE
WORDS RIGHT
OUT OF MY
MOUTH



OH,
IT'S ON
NOW!



TIME TO
WATCH YOU
BLEED,
SUCKA!



I
DON'T
THINK
SO.



WHERE
IS THE NECKLACE
YOU TOOK FROM
THE OLD LADY AT
THE MALL?

FORGET
YOU, PUNK!
I DON'T GO
TO NO
MALLS!



SO
THAT'S WHAT
THIS IS ALL
ABOUT...



"I SOON LEARNED THE CONSEQUENCES OF GIVING IN TO MY ANGER..."

SO, IF YOU DON'T GO TO THE MALL, THEN WHICH ONE OF YOUR PLAYMATES DOES?



I AIN'T TELLING YOU NOthin', FOOL!

THAT REMAINS TO BE SEEN.



"THE RAGE TOOK OVER AND INSTEAD OF LISTENING TO MY SURROUNDINGS AS I'D BEEN TRAINED TO DO-- ALL I COULD HEAR WAS THE WAR DRUM BEAT OF MY OWN HEART.

THE ONLY THING REMAININ' TO BE SEEN IS YOUR BRAINS ALL OVER THE PLACE, TOUGH GUY.



"I NEVER HEARD IT COMING--"

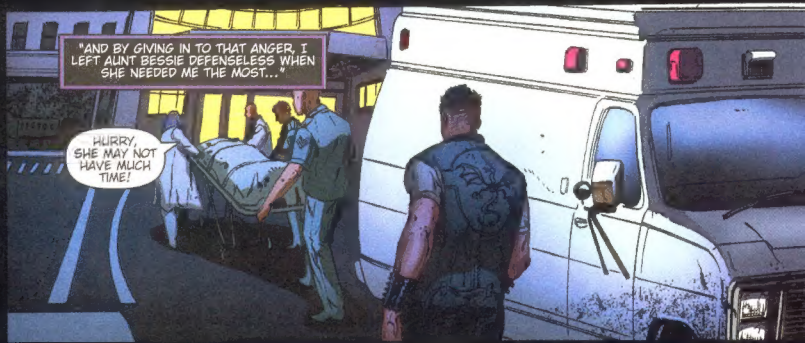
MAN, THIS GUY HITS HARD.

GOOD THING YOU HIT HARDER.

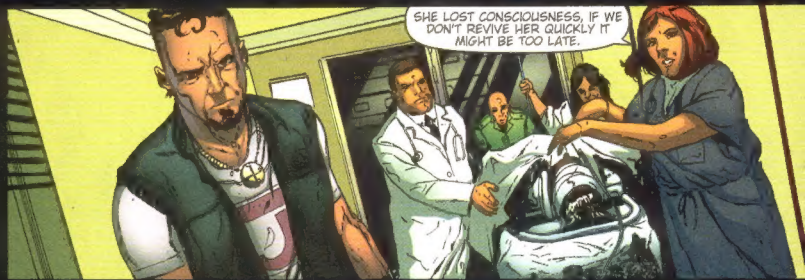
HA HA HA

"AND BY GIVING IN TO THAT ANGER, I LEFT AUNT BESSIE DEFENSELESS WHEN SHE NEEDED ME THE MOST..."

HURRY, SHE MAY NOT HAVE MUCH TIME!



SHE LOST CONSCIOUSNESS, IF WE DON'T REVIVE HER QUICKLY IT MIGHT BE TOO LATE.



GET HER TO THE ERI!

IT'S TIME TO FINISH WHAT I STARTED...



INTENSIVE CARE UNIT



TO BE CONTINUED...

BEHIND THE MASK

The Phantom's costume.
By Ed Rhoades

The Phantom is credited by most as the first costumed hero in comics. He predates Superman and Batman and the plethora of others to wear a skintight outfit in following years. In a business where everyone is inspired or influenced by someone, how did The Phantom begin the whole thing?

Having already created the successful comic strip *Mandrake the Magician* in June of 1934, Lee Falk turned his attention to a new kind of hero. Since his original plan was to name his protagonist 'The Gray Ghost', it's possible that John Singleton Mosby was the kind of hero Lee had in mind. Mosby was a real-life daring figure whose exploits during the Civil War were similar to those of Lee's new character. Both Mosby and The Phantom single handedly captured an important general, freed imprisoned men and captured the attention of the public.

Mosby was gray because of his Civil War uniform, and it's possible that was the way Lee envisioned The Gray Ghost.

However, when *Mandrake* assistant artist, Ray Moore, began to translate Lee's ideas to comic panels, he and a group of fellow artists who shared a studio had meetings and discussions during which Ray and the guys planned how The Phantom would appear. Ray's widow, Claire Moore, told me that Lee only came to one or two of the meetings, and all of the Phantom art that was printed was Ray's work.

The hood or cowl was reminiscent of an old time executioner with a form suggesting a skull. The skintight shirt and tights were the sort of thing an old time circus performer would wear. The shorts were drawn with a hatching that gradually evolved into stripes that might be inspired by a costume from a Shakespearean play. It was no accident that the visual to the Oath sworn on the skull bears a resemblance to Hamlet's 'Alas Poor Yorick' scene.

The Phantom's eyes were shown early on in Ray Moore's drawings. Later, the convention of leaving white spaces instead had two advantages. It was easier to draw, and it looked a little spooky. Lee said the white eyes on ancient Greek and Roman statues inspired it, but in their day, those statues had eyes painted over them. The white eyes were a convention maintained by Wilson McCoy and Sy Barry. There were two rare occasions where Sunday strip artist, Bill Lignante, showed the Phantom's eyes. Once was when Queen Samaris asked the Phantom to marry her. Bill thought showing him wide-eyed made sense for the situation. Fans still haven't quit talking about it.

For the movies, discussions showed an expectation of not showing the Phantom's eyes or his face. However, I'm sure Billy Zane's agent had other ideas. When wearing the hard plastic molded mask, the area around his eyes was blackened so nothing showed but the whites of his eyes, however, his scenes as Mr. Walker made no attempt to hide his face. Billy and Phantom serial actor Tom Tyler wore a thick black mask when in costume. In the comics, the mask has varied somewhat being a bit thinner in the early 70's and thicker in the following decades.

The costume's color has been the subject of much discussion amongst Phantom fans. In the newspapers, The Phantom was referred to as a gray figure. The first color version of the character adorned the cover of the *Big Little Book* in 1936. For that issue, the Phantom's costume was an orange color. In the following *Better Little Books*, he was again orange for 'The Sign of the Skull', green for 'Desert Justice', purple for 'The Return of The Phantom', blue for 'The Sky Pirates' and back to purple for 'The Phantom and the Girl of Mystery'.

In the first US Phantom comic to feature color, the character was given a brown costume.

When King Features Syndicate finally produced a Sunday version of the strip, they had to decide upon an official color. There is much speculation about this including a rumor that it was a printer's error making The Phantom purple. When considering possibilities gray was just too drab to take advantage of color printing. Perhaps they tried using red and blue to get a neutral color, a substitute for an 'off gray'. The new Phantom purple was seen in all the US papers, but in other countries, they decided for themselves. In Scandinavia, his outfit is blue; in South America, Turkey, France, and Italy, it is red.

The Tom Tyler Columbia serial from 1943 was in black and white and Lee expressed a disappointment saying, 'It's too bad they didn't have stretch material back then.'

For the Paramount big budget film, there were about a dozen designs created, with the final one being two thin layers with a fabric showing lines that reacted as a moray pattern. The man responsible for the costume, Matt Britton says they were inspired by tribal tattoos from real pygmies to make an intricate design echoing the skull motif in the belt and ring.

In the animated cartoon series and the unused pilot for a newer Phantom film, the costume had chameleon like qualities.

I suspect that when a new film actually begins development, they will try to distance themselves from the Billy Zane film, which could disappoint fans, since that movie played pretty close to traditional Phantom lore.

More thought is going into movie costumes for comic characters these days. Batman's armored suit was result of a research and development for the military. Daredevil's leather costume is practical for gymnastic stunts over cement. In *Superman Returns*, the costume has a beveled 'S' with a leather like cape. A major concern in such designs is licensing. Making sure that kids are sold on buying action figures is almost as important as promoting the movie itself.

Moonstone's Phantom has a traditional purple costume with white spaces in the mask. The painted pulp-like covers of Joel Napstek and the tight painted Doug Klauba covers provided an especially chilling effect. Moonstone's 'Legacy' presented a realistic depiction of how the first Phantom might have looked with a makeshift costume inspired by the Wasaka idol.

Both recent covers and interiors present a vintage look with the exception of metallic skull belt buckles that add another additional touch of realism.

While other comic heroes' costumes have changed through the years, the first costumed hero of comics continues with a mysterious look that holds up and still looks great after 70 years.